

## THE GOLDEN SILENCE.

WILLIAM WINTER.

What though I sing no other song?  
What though I speak no other word?  
Is silence shame? Is patience wrong?  
At least, one song of mine was heard,

One echo from the mountain air,  
One ocean murmur, glad and free—  
One sign that nothing grand or fair  
In all this world was lost to me.

I will not wake the sleeping lyre;  
I will not strain the chords of thought;  
The sweetest fruit of all desire  
Comes its own way and comes unsought.

Though all the birds of earth were dead,  
And all their music passed away,  
What Nature wishes should be said  
She'll find the rightful voice to say!

Her heart is in the shimmering leaf,  
The drifting cloud, the lonely sky,  
And all we know of bliss or grief,  
She speaks in forms that cannot die.

The mountain peaks that shine afar,  
The silent stars, the pathless sea,  
Are living signs of all we are,  
And types of all we hope to be.

## THE CHURCH AND ITS OFFICERS.

BY J. W. REER.

In my last I showed that in the New Testament the terms Bishop and Elder are not applied indifferently to the same persons; that the former is specific and is always applied to an overseer, while the latter is generic and sometimes means a bishop, sometimes a deacon, and sometimes an aged brother. I will now proceed with a

## HISTORY OF THE TERMS.

We find "Apostles and Elders," (Acts, 15: 2, 4, 6, 23; 16: 4), but we nowhere find "Apostles and Bishops." We read of "Bishops and Deacons," (Phil., 1: 1), but do not read of "Apostles and Deacons," or of "Elders and Deacons." But we know that the Apostles of Christ were bishops; and if we allow that the term "Elders" in the 15th and 16th chapters of Acts, implies or even includes deacons, then it is clear that the expression "Apostles and Elders" includes bishops and deacons; and it is equally plain that the Bishopric and Diaconate were offices intended for every local church of God. I do not claim, as some have done, that there were no other offices; but I do claim that in every fully organized and officered church there were "Bishops and Deacons," and that these are permanent offices, by whatever name they may be known.

We must not, however, rashly conclude that there can be no church without bishops and deacons. Whenever a number of disciples voluntarily associate themselves together for the worship of God, and the advancement of his cause, they constitute a church, and the officers are afterward ordained or appointed. In Acts, 14: 23, we read: "They ordained them elders in every church;" the churches existed before the elders were ordained. When it is contemplated to ordain elders, it must first be determined "if any be blameless," etc., (Titus 6), in short, whether there are any brethren who have the necessary qualifications. If none such are found, it would be better to go on with their work under existing disadvantages than to make matters worse by ordaining incompetent and improper persons. But I must return to my subject.

As the work progressed churches were everywhere established, and in these churches bishops and deacons were ordained; but during the lives of the Apostles there was a general and particular superintendence of the whole work by them or by such as were endorsed and appointed by them. Paul speaks of having "the care of all the churches," 2 Cor. 8: 16-24. He instructed Timothy how "to behave himself in the church of God," 1 Tim. 3: 15, and in these instructions he included the ordaining of bishops and deacons and his demeanor toward the elders. Titus he left in Crete to "set in order the things that were wanting," Titus, 1: 5. In most of the churches there were colleges of bishops and deacons ordained. Probably there were as many of the former as of the latter. But as the Apostles passed away and the exercise of this general care on their part ended, there seemed to be a necessity for its passing to others; and, in fact, it is evident that they gave this charge to faithful men, such as Timothy and Titus, with instructions that they should do the same. He gave the charge to Timothy "before God and the elect angels," and said, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also;" 2 Tim., 2: 2. In the latter part of the first century and the winding up of the Apostolic age, there was a change in or a settling of this official nomenclature, as appears from the writings of the Apostolic fathers, and especially from the epistles of St. Ignatius, bishop of the church at Antioch, who

as a martyr was devoured by wild beasts at Rome. The exact year of his martyrdom is in dispute, but the best authorities put it not later than A. D., 116. Your attention is now invited to some quotations from the

## EPISTLES OF ST. IGNATIUS.

It should be stated before making any quotations, that our author speaks familiarly of bishops, Presbyters (elders), and deacons. Presbyters are also called priests. In his epistle to the Ephesians, section 1, we find, "Onesimus, who by inexpressible love is ours, but according to the flesh is your bishop." "Blessed be God who has granted unto you, who are so worthy of him, such an excellent bishop."

Sec. 2. "For what concerns my fellow-servant Burrhus, and your most blessed deacon in things pertaining to God, I entreat you that he may tarry longer both for yours and your bishop's honor." It is, therefore, fitting that you should by all means glorify Jesus Christ, \* \* \* and that, being subject to your bishop and the Presbytery, ye may be wholly and thoroughly sanctified.

Sec. 3. For even Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is sent by the will of the Father, as the bishops, appointed unto the utmost bounds of the earth, are by the will of Christ."

Sec. 4. "Wherefore it will become you to run together according to the will of your bishop, as also ye do. For your famous Presbytery (worthy of God) is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp."

Sec. 5. If the prayer of one or two be of such force as we are told, how much more powerful shall that of the bishop and the whole church be!"

Sec. 6. "The more any one sees his bishop silent the more let him revere him."

Sec. 20. "Obeying your bishop and the Presbytery with an entire affection."

It will be noticed that he speaks of their bishop, not bishops; and of the Presbytery, which is a college or body of elders, and of deacons. I will make but one quotation from his epistle to the Magnesians:

Sec. 13. "Study, therefore, to be confirmed in the doctrine of our lord, and of his apostles, that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may prosper both in body and spirit—in faith and charity—in the Son and in the Father, and in the Holy Spirit—in the beginning and in the end; together with your most worthy bishop, and the well-wrought spiritual crown of your presbytery, and your deacons which are according to God."

In his letter to the Trallians he seems to be extreme in his comparisons, but is consistent in his enumeration of the different officers in the church, as set forth in his other epistles. In Sec. 3 he says: "In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ; and the bishop as the Father, and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God, and the college of the apostles." In Sec. 7, he adds, "He that is within the altar is pure; but he that is without, that is, that does anything without the bishop, and presbyters and deacons, is not pure in his conscience."

In his epistle to the Philadelphians, Sec. 4, he says: "Wherefore let it be your endeavor to partake all of the same holy eucharist; for there is but one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the unity of his blood; one altar; as also there is one bishop, together with his presbytery, and the deacons, my fellow-servants; that so, whatsoever ye do do it according to the will of God." Sec. 10. "Some bishops, some priests and deacons."

To the Smyrnians, Sec. 12 he writes: "I salute your very worthy bishop, and your venerable presbytery; and your deacons." And in his letter to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, he says: "My soul be security for them that submit to their bishop, with their presbyters and deacons."

These letters declare that early in the second century it was considered necessary to the complete organization of a church that there should be a bishop, a body of elders (Presbytery), and a body of deacons. Ignatius says, "Without these there is no church;" not that these constituted the church, but that they were necessary for its completion. In Wake's Apostolical Fathers, Edition 1850, Stanford and Swords, N. Y., on p. 123, in the "Preliminary Discourse of the Martyrdom of St. Ignatius," we have this testimony concerning him: "This is certain, that growing eminent both in the knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, and in a life framed exactly; framed according to the strictest rule of it, he was, upon the death of Eudodius, chosen by the apostles that were still living, to be bishop of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria; and whatever Anastasius pretends, received imposition of hands from them. "On the same page it is said that his own diocese (which means the church at Antioch) "was blessed with his government above forty years." If his death occurred A. D. 116, this would place his

ordination A. D. 76; and if he was a good man, as all antiquity represents him to have been, his writings should have considerable weight. Eusebius says that "from Smyrna where he tarried some time with his old acquaintance and fellow disciple, St. Polycarp, he wrote to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, and Romans; and, being gone farther on his way to Troas, he from thence wrote to the Philadelphians and Smyrnians; and a particular letter to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna." His letters would therefore seem to have the endorsement of St. Polycarp. They were written at a time when, if they had contained any errors concerning church offices, they would have been corrected. It is safe to conclude, therefore, that at the time referred to, the churches had bishops, elders, and deacons.

## ST. CLEMENT'S TESTIMONY.

We next turn to St. Clement, who is supposed to have written soon after the death of the Apostle Paul. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Sec. 42, he says with reference to the work of the apostles, "And thus, preaching through counties and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their conversions to be bishops and ministers over such as should afterward believe, having first proved them by the Spirit. Nor was this any new thing, seeing that long before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scripture, in a certain place, 'I will appoint their overseers in righteousness, and their ministers in faith.'"

In this letter, written perhaps as early as A. D., 69 or 70, are found only bishops and ministers or deacons. Therefore, during this interval of about 45 years, between the writing of this epistle and those of St. Ignatius, there were bishops appointed to the utmost bounds of the earth," with their colleges of presbyters and deacons; and it is impossible for me to conceive how this could have been done without the knowledge and direction of the apostles and their co-laborers. Let us now inquire how this may have been done.

Suppose in any given church, left without apostolic superintendence, there had been a body of seven Bishops or Presbyters (Elders). Is it not reasonable to suppose that for their mutual advantage and to harmonize and expedite their work, they would organize so as to have a president? No intelligent body of men would undertake to transact any important business without a head. It is not a debatable question as to whether it would be an advantage to have a central man—leader, or moderator, or president, or overseer (bishop). Neither is it rational to suppose that the Lord was ignorant of this advantage and that he left it unprovided for. This could be done in either of two ways. The eldership might be allowed to select and name their own overseer; or the overseer might be selected by the elders and the whole church, and ordained by the Apostles, or by those authorized by them. As he was to be bishop, not of the presbyters only but of the whole church, the latter would seem to be the proper way; and I have no doubt that so it was done. But now for the

## GOSPEL ON THE SUBJECT.

First I will take the church at Ephesus for an example. When Paul was on his way to Jerusalem "from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church," Acts, 20: 17. There was a plurality of elders. We are not told how many elders there were; but from the use of the word "all" with reference to them, I take it that there were several of them. See vs. 25, 36, 37. Smith in his bible Dic., under the head of Ephesus says: "The address at Miletus shows that the church at Ephesus was thoroughly organized under its presbyters (elders). At a later period Timothy was set over them, as we learn from the two epistles addressed to him." I know that he is in neither of these epistles called the bishop; and yet no one can read these epistles with an unbiased mind, without learning that he was the overseer of that church, not excepting even the elders. Take, for instance, such texts as the following: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father;" "Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man." But why continue to select particular texts when the entire letters so plainly indicate that Timothy was the overseer of the church of Ephesus? He was, no doubt, "the angel of the church of Ephesus," Rev. 2: 21. When Ignatius wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians, Onesimus was their bishop. When John wrote to the seven churches in Asia, and when Ignatius wrote to the Smyrnians, Polycarp was the bishop of

the church of Smyrna. Each of the other five churches to which John wrote had its angel or bishop; and I have no reason to doubt that every other fully organized church had its bishop, and presbyters (elders), and deacons.

I had intended to include Evangelists in this paper, but it is now long enough, and I must reserve that for my next. I invite a careful examination and just criticism of the views presented in these articles, and hold myself in readiness to answer any reasonable question that may be raised. I am aware that some of my esteemed brethren hold views somewhat different, and I am as willing to hear them as I am desirous that they shall read after me. Let us reason together and seek till the truth is found and with it let us be content.

Lathrop, Cal., July 31st, 1884.

## A SYNOPSIS OF A SERMON.

Addressed to the Whole Brotherhood—All Those Who Keep the Ordinances of the Sacred Book.

BY ISAAC PRICE.

Dearly Beloved: Please turn to 2 Peter and read the first chapter carefully; and then turn to verses 5—10, and read prayerfully. Our text is, The seven precious structures to be built on Faith, viz.: Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godliness, Brotherly Kindness and Love.

Faith is the foundation of the superstructure of Christian character, and the temple prepared for a habitation of the Holy Spirit. The first floor in the building is Virtue—efficiency, excellence, active quality—moral excellence, chastity.—Webster.

The second floor, Knowledge—knowledge of self, and of God and his Word and works, so far as lies in our power, consistent with our condition, circumstances and other duties.

Temperance—i. e., moderation in all we do. Temperance is the proper use of everything that is good, and total abstinence from all that does no good, but may do harm.

Christians have consecrated themselves, body, soul and spirit, to the service of the living God, and have no liberty to eat, or drink, or do anything else, simply to gratify the appetite or inclination. They are under solemn obligation, "whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, to do all to the glory of God." And when Christians so do, it will be easier to practice Patience.

Indulgence in stimulants of any kind, disturbs the equanimity of mind, and tends to impatience. Patience—oh, what an estimable grace, and how seldom is it attained, in its full beauty and excellence! But, like every other virtue, it needs the guidance of true wisdom, as it is possible to cultivate patience, to the loss of other virtues.

Godliness—is the wise and proper use of God's gifts, the power of endurance, resulting from a habitual walk in conformity with his revealed will. "Godliness is profitable in all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."—Tim. 4: 8.

Brotherly Kindness—herein we sadly fail. This fraternal quality allies the spirit of its possessor to Christ, as our Elder Brother, and to all the elect of God, as our spiritual brethren. Had that spirit prevailed hitherto, we should now see "How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

There would then have been no "lines" no clashing, no rivalry, nor bitterness, and everything which now marks division would have been eliminated. May God grant us the needed grace to retrace our steps, so that we may all flow together again in love.

Lastly, Love. O, the beauty and the power of Love! "God is love." Love to the Brotherhood is proof of discipleship. Love to each other well becomes the children of our Heavenly Father. The parable of the Prodigal Son exhibits the extent of the Love of God for humanity, as well as the precious and unspeakable gift of his Son for our salvation.

O, for grace from above, to attain to the true Christian Love: Dearly beloved, are we trying to pattern after the example of our blessed Jesus? As we become more like him, we will be more like each other. And if we have the Love, as described in 2 Cor. 13, we will all flow together again. Those who truly love God and are in unity in heart, are the children of Jesus, and are so recognized by the Heavenly Father.

Be careful, my dear brethren, to do nothing to hinder the growth of grace in the hearts of any of God's children. Cultivate heart religion, family religion, and neglect not the assembly of the brethren. Seek purity of heart and peace will follow. And may the blessing of the Lord be with us all.

We pass often from love to ambition, but we seldom return from ambition to love.